

INTRODUCTION

A note on CARLOS SALZEDO

Salzedo's innate discrimination and logic earned him the respect and admiration of the many notable people whose friendship he enjoyed. His thoughtful interest in world events, in people, and in important issues—as well as in all phases of music, of course—was an integral part of his personality.

Among his friends he counted the late Harvard University President Charles William Eliot and the late theologian and author Henry van Dyke, with both of whom he often spent evenings in discussion during the years they summered together on Mount Desert Island in Maine. Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, one of America's great musical patrons, considered Salzedo a friend and had great respect for his opinion. She also commissioned him to compose works for harp and premiered them at her festivals in Paris, Chicago, and Pittsfield.

Salzedo was an active member of musical societies. At the Bohemians in New York, for example, he organized and performed a concert in honor of his old friend Pablo Casals; he was chairman of the program committee of the Beethoven Association, founded by Harold Bauer; he was one of the Board of Directors of the International Society for Contemporary Music, and with Edgard Varèse organized and rehearsed many concerts for the International Composers' Guild.

Both Fritz Reiner and Otto Klemperer, who saw him in action, regarded him as a great conductor. Igor Stravinsky was struck by his astonishing ear and reading ability and called him one of the best sight-readers he had ever encountered, particularly in the matter of contemporary music. Nowadays it is hard to imagine that prior to the concerts of the International Composers' Guild in the 1920s, the works of Ives, Stravinsky, Ruggles, Scriabin, Bartok, and others had never been performed in America.

The first performance of Salzedo's own "Concerto for Harp and Seven Wind Instruments" took place at a concert of the International Composers' Guild under the direction of Artur Rodzinski. The second was with the Cincinnati Symphony under Reiner's direction. Salzedo was soloist on both occasions. He appeared as soloist with all the leading symphonies of his day and was guest conductor of the Cleveland Orchestra when that group performed his "Enchanted Isle." On this occasion I was the harp soloist. Together we often performed his "Pentacle" for two harps, a work commissioned by Mrs. Coolidge. Among the performances of this work was one at a concert of the Boston Flute Club, of which Georges Laurent was president. At the same concert I performed Salzedo's "Concerto for Harp and Seven Wind Instruments" with the principal wind players of the Boston Symphony. (Serge Koussevitzky was in the audience.) Some fifteen or twenty years later we recorded some of Salzedo's transcriptions for two harps for Mercury Records. With Georges Barrère and Horace Britt, Salzedo performed Bernard Wagenaar's "Triple Concerto" on a special broadcast concert of the International Society for Contemporary Music. This work was also played with Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra, as well as under Leon Barzin's direction in Carnegie Hall.